

GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAM

Refugee Resettlement Terminology



A-C

AOR (Affidavit of Relationship)

An immigration document testifying to the nature of a relationship; AORs are part of the process to apply for parents, spouses, and children to be reunited with the applicant in the United States; this program is currently suspended indefinitely.

ADJUSTMENT OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

The process of changing from temporary (refugee or parolee, for example) status to permanent resident status; this process is managed through USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) and is available to those in the United States who meet all of the requirements; if approved, the applicant is given a Permanent Resident Alien card (or “green card”)

ALIEN

A person in the United States who is not a citizen of the United States

ALIEN NUMBER

A unique eight- or nine-digit identifying number that USCIS assigns to refugees and immigrants upon arrival in the United States

ANCHOR

Also referred to as a “U.S. Tie”, a family member or friend in the United States who can provide assistance to a refugee during the resettlement process

ASSURANCE

The agreement of a voluntary resettlement agency to sponsor a refugee; this agreement is signed by a designated voluntary agency official and submitted to the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) for forwarding overseas; a copy of the agreement is included in the refugee’s travel documents for presentation at the United States port of entry (POE)

ASYLEE

A person meeting the definition of a refugee who is physically present in the United States or is at a U.S. port of entry (POE) when s/he is granted asylum

BEST PRACTICE

A program, method, or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and therefore is used as a benchmark

CASE NUMBER

Generally, a two letter, six-digit number assigned to and serving as an identifier for a refugee case; each member of the case shares a case number; the two letters usually indicate the country of first asylum

CASTE SYSTEM

A closed form of social stratification in which membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life

CBP

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

CITIZEN

A person who owes allegiance to a nation state and is entitled to its protection and to exercise rights of membership, such as voting. Under U.S. law, citizens include persons born in the United States or its territories, certain persons born abroad to a U.S. citizen, and non-citizens who become citizens through naturalization

CITIZENSHIP

Generally synonymous with nationality; a person without citizenship in any country is considered “stateless”

CO (Cultural Orientation)

A training process conducted overseas to prepare the refugee with an understanding and managed expectations of the resettlement process; topics typically include resettlement agency role, housing, employment, transportation, education, health, money management, rights and responsibilities, cultural adjustment, and travel; cultural orientation often varies between different refugee camps and populations

DERIVATIVE

A spouse or child that is granted refugee status if accompanying or following-to-join the PA (principal applicant)

DHS

The Department of Homeland Security, the federal department of which USCIS is a part; also used to refer to the Department of Human Services, the local offices that administer food stamp, and Families First programs in the state

DOS/PRM (Department of State/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration)

Oversees the flow of refugees into the United States; funds the R&P (Reception and Placement) Program

DSS

Department of Social Services. All refugees need to go to the Department of Social Services within 5 work days after they arrive. During this appointment they will apply for Food Stamps (EBT card), Medicaid, and some refugees will apply for cash assistance. For Food Stamps (EBT card) and Medicaid appointments are not needed. Staff will fill out needed paperwork and send it in.

EAD (Employment Authorization Document)

A card issued by USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Service) that proves that the holder is authorized to work in the United States

ELT (English Language Training)

A synonym for ESL (English as a Second Language)

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FAMILY REUNIFICATION

A type of refugee “case” characterized by a family member(s) arriving to join a family member(s) who is already in the country

FREE CASE

A refugee case designated for resettlement that has no family ties or anchors already in the U.S.

FSP (Family Self-Sufficiency Plan)

A written plan of action, established between a refugee and his/her caseworker, that details the goals for that client and the steps that need to be taken in order for the client to reach those goals; this is a required document (under the federal regulations) for federally-funded refugee programs

GREEN CARD

An informal name for the Permanent Resident card

I-94

A document (also called the Arrival-Departure Record), issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, that is completed at the time of entry into the U.S. by foreign citizens

IDP (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON)

Those persons forced or obliged to flee from their homes – in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, natural or human-made disasters – and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border

IMMIGRANT

A foreigner who comes into a country for the purpose of permanent residence because of the voluntary desire to live in another country, or other reasons that may include economics, politics, family re-unification, or natural disaster

IOM (International Organization on Migration)

This organization works with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants; on a practical level, all refugee travel to the U.S. is coordinated through this organization

MEDICAID

A U.S. healthcare program for those who are low income and have few resources

MG (Match Grant)

A job placement and financial assistance program, offered by resettlement agencies, that is funded by ORR

NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)

An organized entity that is functionally independent of, and does not represent, a government or state; this term is normally applied to organizations devoted to humanitarian and human rights causes, many of which implement their refugee-related programs in partnership with UNHCR and other agencies

ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement)

Federal office that oversees and distributes most refugee funding; part of the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services

OVERSEAS REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTERS

Centers where refugees, once selected for resettlement, are gathered in order to receive the orientation and language training which will help them to prepare for their resettlement

PA (Principal Applicant)

Primary person in a refugee case who must substantiate a claim for refugee status in an interview with an immigration officer

PAROLEE

An alien allowed into the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit; this is a temporary status only, requiring parolees to either leave when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist or adjust their status to Legal Permanent Resident, if eligible

PC (Preferred Communities)

An intensive case management program that includes group programming, offered by resettlement agencies, that is funded by ORR

PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD

Identification indicating a person is authorized to live and work in the United States of America on a permanent basis; slang term is "green card"

PORT OF ENTRY

The place where a refugee lawfully enters a country

R&P (Reception and Placement)

Funded by DOS/PRM through the VOLAG, this program assists newly arrived refugees with financial and case management assistance for a period of up to 90 days

RCA (Refugee Cash Assistance)

Federally-funded cash assistance program administered by the North Carolina Office for Refugees; available for up to eight months post-arrival for eligible clients

REFUGEE

A person who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality or being outside the country of his/her former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it

REFUGEE CAMP

Temporary settlement built to receive refugees, usually built and run by a government, the United Nations, or international organizations; although intended to be a temporary means of meeting basic human needs, many refugee camps have existed for decades

RPC (Refugee Processing Center)

The central data repository for all overseas and domestic resettlement operations; the RPC manages WRAPS, the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System

RESETTLEMENT

The movement of individuals or groups from one location to another, usually with the intention that this move be permanent; in regard to refugees, this involves the selection and transfer of individuals from the country in which they have sought protection to a country that has agreed to admit them as refugees

RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

A non-profit organization that provides sponsorship and initial resettlement services for refugees entering the United States

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY

The country in which the refugee ultimately resettles; this country provides the refugee with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by citizens; the resettlement country should allow for refugees to become naturalized citizens

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES

The top ten countries that accept refugees for permanent resettlement (in order of the ratio resettled to host country population) are Australia, Canada, the United States, Norway, New Zealand, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Ireland

RMA (Refugee Medical Assistance)

Federally-funded medical coverage program administered by the NC Office for Refugees

SECONDARY MIGRANT

A refugee who moves from his/her original resettlement site to another state

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The goal of every refugee program funded by ORR; self-sufficiency is defined as a client earning income at a level which renders him or her ineligible for cash assistance programs

SIV (Special Immigrant Visa)

A special status given to Iraqis and Afghans who worked as interpreters with American armed services; they qualify for the same benefits as refugees for up to eight months after arrival

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Adaptation of the refugee to their new environment

SSI (Supplemental Security Income)

Refugees who are 65 and older or disabled qualify for this form of financial assistance for up to seven years; they must attain US citizenship to retain benefits after that time

TRAFFICKING VICTIM

A person who is forced into the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of reproductive slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, or a modern-day form of slavery

TRAVEL LOAN

A loan issued to refugees by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to pay for the costs of their transportation from overseas to the U.S. resettlement site; refugees typically begin paying back this interest-free loan after their first six months in the U.S.; the repayment of these loans enables the U.S. government to continue to assist refugees

UN (United Nations)

An international organization founded in 1945 whose stated aims are facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and achievement of world peace.

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT

An individual who has migrated into a country and is in violation of the immigration laws and sovereignty of that country; see illegal immigrant

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is a United Nations agency mandated to protect and support refugees at the request of a government or the UN itself, and assists in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country

U.S. TIE

Formerly known as “anchor”, a family member or friend in the United States who can provide assistance to a refugee during the resettlement process

USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services)

A component of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It performs many administrative functions formerly carried out by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)

VOLAG (Voluntary Agency)

National organization that assists in resettling refugees in the United States; all local resettlement programs are affiliated with one or more of these national agencies